



Nevada Operations Office News

National Nuclear Security Administration

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For Immediate Release:

October 10, 2002

Public Meeting Scheduled to Discuss Supplemental Programmatic EIS Regarding Modern Pit Facility

The National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Operations Office (NNSA/NV) will host a public meeting to discuss issues and receive comments on the Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a Modern Pit Facility. The meeting is scheduled from 7-10 p.m. on Thursday, October 17, 2002, at NNSA/NV's Nevada Support Facility, 232 Energy Way, North Las Vegas.

This public scoping meeting is one of a number of steps in carrying out recommendations to develop a modern capability to manufacture plutonium pits. Pit production was shut down in 1989 at the Rocky Flats Plant, and no pits have been produced since. The United States is the only nuclear power without the capability to manufacture a plutonium pit, a critical component of a nuclear weapon that functions as a trigger to allow a modern nuclear weapon to function. A new facility would reestablish the capability to manufacture all pit types in the nation's current nuclear stockpile and meet any future requirements in an environmentally compliant manner. The National Nuclear Security Administration's strategy calls for a new facility to be in production by approximately 2020.

The supplement to the Programmatic EIS will support two decisions: (1) whether to proceed with a Modern Pit Facility; and (2) if so, where to locate it. Five potential locations will be evaluated in the EIS: (1) Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) at Los Alamos, New Mexico; (2) Nevada Test Site, 65 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Nevada; (3) Pantex Plant at Amarillo, Texas; (4) Savannah River Site at Aiken, South Carolina; and (5) the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant at Carlsbad, New Mexico. The EIS will also evaluate the no-action alternative of maintaining current plutonium pit capabilities at LANL, and the reasonableness of upgrading the existing facilities at LANL to increase pit production capacity.

NNSA is inviting comments related to its intention to prepare this Supplemental Programmatic EIS. Comments should be submitted no later than November 22, 2002 and can be mailed to Mr. Jay Rose, Document Manager, U.S. Department of Energy/NNSA,

1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20585. Comments may also be faxed to 1-202-586-5324, or e-mailed to James.Rose@nnsa.doe.gov. Please mark envelopes, faxes, and email: "Supplement to the Programmatic EIS on SSM for a Modern Pit Facility Comments."